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S E R M O N

PREACH'D before the

U N I V E R S I T Y

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C A M B R I D G E,

On *Thursday* the 7th of *June*, 1716.

Being the Day of Publick THANKSGIVING
to Almighty God for Suppressing the late
Unnatural REBELLION,

By *DAN. WATERLAND*, B. D.
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CHANCELLOR.

THE SECOND EDITION.

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II SAM. XX. 1, 2.

And there happened to be there a Man of Belial, whose Name was Sheba, the Son of Bichri, a Benjamite: and He blew a Trumpet and said, We have no Part in David, neither have we Inheritance in the Son of Jesse: every Man to his Tents, O Israel.

So every Man of Israel went up from after David, and followed Sheba the Son of Bichri: But the Men of Judah clave unto their King from Jordan even to Jerusalem.

THIS, and the foregoing Chapter, give us the History of the Rise, Progress and Conclusion, of an Unnatural Rebellion rais'd against Good King *David*: One that appeared formidable, and might have been of unhappy Consequence to Him, and his Kingdoms; had not his timely Care and Vigilance (with the Blessing of God thereupon) seasonably suppress'd it. The Narrative of the Matter is this.

* King *David* had been some time absent from his Royal City, having fled out of the Land for *Absalom*. But as soon as the Death of *Absalom* had removed all Difficulties, The People were at Strife throughout all The Tribes of Israel, about bringing the King back to Jerusalem, to reinstate Him in his Throne.

* 2 Sam. c. 19. v. 9.

2 *A Thanksgiving* SERMON *before*

The King hearing of the Zeal and Concern which his Subjects of *Israel* had for Him, thought proper to intimate it to the ¹ *Elders of Judah*, inviting Them, as being nearest akin to Him, of the same Tribe with Himself; ² his *Brethren*, his *Bones*, and his *Flesh*, as Himself expresseth it, to come to Him with all convenient Speed, that they might not be *the last to bring back the King*.

By this affectionate and endearing Message, *He bowed the Heart of all the Men of Judah, even as the Heart of one Man, so that They sent this Word unto the King, Return Thou and all thy Servants. And soon after They went, in Person, to meet Him, and to conduct Him over Jordan, ⁴ in his Way to Jerusalem.*

While the *Men of Judah* were thus paying their early Offices of Duty and Respect to their Royal Master, *The Men of Israel* thinking Themselves neglected and postponed, in a Matter which concern'd their Honour, and their Interest, began to be full of Anger and Resentment against their Brethren of *Judah*: and accordingly came to the King with Remonstrances and Complaints against Them. ⁵ *Why have our Brethren, the Men of Judah, stolen Thee away, and have brought the King and his Household, and all David's Men with Him over Jordan?* To which the Men of *Judah* replied very justly, that the Reason was, because the King was ⁶ *near of Kin* to Them; intimating withal, that what They did, was not so much, with an Eye to their own Advantage (not having eaten at all of the King's Cost) as out of their particular Duty and Affection to their Sovereign, to whom They were so nearly related.

1 V. 11. 2 V. 12. 3 V. 14. 4 V. 15. 5 V. 41.
6 V. 42.

This

This did not satisfy: But still the *Israelites* insisted, that They had * *ten Parts in the King*, according to the Number of their Tribes, and therefore *more Right in David* than the other: and *why then*, say They, *did ye despise Us, that our Advice should not be first had in bringing back our King?* The Men of *Judah* being hereby warm'd and irritated, gave Them rough Language in Return; and *their Words were fiercer than the Words of the Men of Israel.*

And now Matters began to look towards a Rupture. Which yet, very probably, might have been prevented, but that *there happened to be there a Man of Belial*, a factious, turbulent Man; (one who probably had had an inveterate Hatred to the House of David) *whose Name was Sheba, the Son of Bichri, a Benjamite*, perhaps of the House and Lineage of Saul, as was *Shimei*; He knowing how to take Advantage of a popular Discontent, and wanting not the Will to do it, presently *blew a Trumpet and said, We have no Part in David, neither have we Inheritance in the Son of Jesse; every Man to his Tents, O Israel.* As much as to say, "We, of the Tribes of *Israel*, are dismiss'd from "King David; and have no farther Interest, or "Concern, with Him. He has discarded us to "take our Brethren in; and has no regard but to "the House of *Judah*. To your Tents, O *Israel*: "and look ye out for another King. This was putting the most invidious and malicious Construction upon what had been done, that could be. And was turning the Rage of the discontented People upon the King Himself, who had no way affronted Them, except it was by his inviting, and admitting the Men of *Judah*, which He had so great Reason to do,

* V. 43.

But

4 *A Thanksgiving SERMON before*

But when Men's Minds are sore, and fretted with Contention. They are very apt to run into Extremes, and to take every Thing by the worst Handle; and so every Man of Israel went up from after David (deserted, and revolted from Him) and followed Sheba the Son of Bichri. It was presently made a Party-Concern, and accordingly, all, that were there, joined in it. Some, we may suppose, out of Resentment and Ill-will; and others out of Fear, or Shame; least They should seem unconcerned for, or regardless of, what was, or what was pretended to be, the Common Cause of their Brethren.

By every Man of Israel, in the Text, we are not to understand All the ten Tribes; but that Part only who were there present; all that came to conduct the King over Jordan; probably a small Number in Comparison to the Whole.

The Men of Judah however, as well out of Affection and bounden Duty, as because They had been the unhappy Occasion of the others Revolt, came unto their King from Jordan even to Jerusalem, conducting Him all the Way to his Royal Seat, placing Him in his Throne, and steddily adhering to his Interest, against all Opposers.

No sooner had the King dispatch'd his necessary Affairs, but He ¹ assembled the Men of Judah together, thinking it high time to look after the growing Rebellion. For, Sheba was so vigilant, that ² He went through all the Tribes of Israel, poisoning the Minds of the King's Loyal Subjects, and drawing many after Him. King David was sufficiently apprehensive of it; and therefore suddenly gave Orders to his Forces to pursue Him. ³ David said to Abisrai, now shall Sheba the Son of Bichri, do us more Harm than did Absalom: Take Thou thy Lord's Ser-

¹ Ch. 20. v. 3; 4. ² V. 14. ³ V. 6.

vants, and pursue after Him lest He get Him fenced Cities, and escape us.

And there went out after Him Joab's Men, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, and all the mighty Men; and they went out of Jerusalem to pursue after Him with all Expedition, to stop his Progress, and thereby to prevent a general Defection of the Tribes. This so seasonable and prudent Dispatch of the King's Forces, had, by the Blessing of God, it's desired Effect.

Sheba was in a little time, besieged and block'd up at the Place of his Rendezvous, which was * *Abel of Beth-maachab*; and the People of the Town, either out of a Sense of Loyalty, or out of Tenderness for Themselves, finding They had no other Remedy, were glad to capitulate, and to buy their Peace, at the Price of the Traytor's Head. Upon this They dispers'd, and the Rebellion ended. This is a brief, but full, Account of the Matter of Fact. These Things, no doubt, *were written for our Admonition*, and may be useful to us, when carefully considered. My Design is,

1. To draw such Reflections and Observations as naturally occur to us, from the Contents of the foregoing History.

2. To make some brief Application of them, so far as is suitable, to the Occasion of this Day's Solemnity.

3. To conclude the whole with a few practical Advices proper to the Place and Audience.

I. I am to draw such Reflections and Observations, as may naturally occur to us, from the Contents of the foregoing History.

* V. 14.

1. And

6 *A Thanksgiving* SERMON before

1. And the first is how Men's Passions, beginning often from some very slight and inconsiderable Occasions, swell, by Degrees, to an amazing Hight: and carry Them farther than They at first intended, or so much as suspected; even to Things which Themselves, when cool and sedate, would have heartily abhorred.

How small and trifling a Circumstance was it (if rightly considered) that the Men of *Judah* happen'd to come *first* to the King; and were before-hand with their Brethren of *Israel*, in paying their dutiful Addresses to Him. Might it not have contented the Men of *Israel*, that their own Hearts were Loyal, that they meant the same Thing with the other, had done their best to signify it, and only failed in a small Circumstance of Time, and that not through any Neglect, or Fault of theirs, but by being prevented by their Brethren? Was it worth contending so Eagerly, who should be there *first* to conduct the King over *Jordan*, so long as both were agreed in the Principle Matter, that He ought to be conducted; and that it was for the Common Interest, that He should return, and be set at the Head of his People? Admitting that the Men of *Judah* had the Advantage by ingratiating Themselves first with the King: yet was this any thing more than what was very natural for Men to take, when They had so fair an Opportunity for it; or than the Men of *Israel* Themselves would gladly have taken in the like Circumstances, and have approved very well, when it had been their own? Could one ever have imagined, that this should be thought Reason sufficient to justify a Revolt, and the taking up Arms against their Sovereign? Had it been told the *Israelites* before-hand, what monstrous Extravagancies They should run into: that They should

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engage in a Rebellion against the Lord's Anointed; and enter into Measures equally destructive to their Country, and Themselves; that They should run the Risk of sacrificing the Lives of Many innocent Subjects; of bringing Destruction and Desolation on many well-deserving Families; of filling their Country with Cries and Tears, laying Cities waste, or burying them in Blood and Ashes: Had these, or the like Scenes of Barbarity and Cruelty (the certain Attendants of a Civil War of any long Continuance) been represented to Them in their blackest Colours before-hand; which of them might not have said, as *Hazael* to the Prophet, * *What is thy Servant a Dog, that He should do this great Thing?*

But when once Men give way to their unruly Passions, They are no longer Masters of their own Thoughts or Designs: but are hurried on by an impetuous Force. Consideration leaves Them; and They advance by imperceptible Steps so far, that They know not how to retreat. † *The Beginning of Strife is, (as the wise Man observes) as when one letteth out Water.* It rages and swells more and more, till it makes an Inundation, and overflows a Country.

The Contest between the Men of *Judah*, and the *Israelites*, was at first, little more than a strong Passion for the King's Interest, and their Country's Good; joined with some Impatience, that any should rival, or go beyond them in it. Thus far it was laudable and generous: and had it stop'd here, all had been well. But They proceeded to quarrel with each other, 'till both were inflamed to the utmost. A Rupture ensues, a Secession follows, and the next Step, is Rebellion.

* 2 Kings 8. 13. † Prov. 17. 14.

B

E. You

8 *A Thanksgiving SERMON before*

2. You may please to Observe farther, that the Contest, however sharp and fierce before, had never come to that Hight it did, had not there happened to be a *Sheba* amongst Them, to *blow the Trumpet* to Sedition and Rebellion. Artful Representations, and studied Disguises; invidious Constructions, and malicious Aggravations; These were what fired their Passions to the utmost; and turn'd 'em into Fury. Then They were prepared to go any Lengths with their Leader. Then They flew off in Rage from that very King, whom, but a little while before, They beheld with the greatest Respect and Veneration.

And here, I cannot but reflect a little upon the Nature of *Incendiaries*. The Leaders and Promoters of Tumults and Seditions. How mischievous a sort of Men They are; how dangerous to any State or Kingdom. Generally speaking, the Bulk or Body, of any People, are disposed to be peaceable and quiet. They love to mind their own proper Business; and would of Themselves, be easy, almost under any Government. They would never think of Rebelling, till loaded with Oppressions; such, as it were better to Die, than to bear any longer. Reason, or the Love of Peace, or the public Good, or their own private Interest, would incline Them to lie Still; and bind Them down to Submission and Order. There's no Pleasure, or Safety in Seditions and Riots, which should make Men fond of being active in Them. They are first drawn in by artificial Insinuations, and crafty Pretences: Such as They have neither Skill, nor Inclination, nor Leisure to enquire into, but, as Scripture observes of some that followed *Ab-salom*, **They go in their Simplicity, and They know not any thing*. The Consequence however is the same,

* 2 Sam. 15. 11.

when

when once their Passions are wound up to a Pitch whatever were the Motives, real or imaginary, which rais'd them. This their designing Leaders know: and They understand too well what use to make of it. But,

3. We are next to take Notice, what absurd, and inconsistent Things Men are hurried into, by a predominant Humour, or Passion; hightening and increasing those very Evils, seeming or real, which They seek to redress.

The Apprehension of being Second only in the King's Favour, was what much afflicted the Men of *Israel*. What Course do they take to remedy this Grievance? Not the true and only pious or prudent Method, that of Patience and Meekness, of Dutiful and Loyal Behaviour, of Zeal for the King's Service, and for the Honour and Interest of their Countrey; which must have gain'd Them the Favour and Affection of their Sovereign, and the Love and Esteem of all wise and good Men: but the direct contrary. They Rebel against that Sovereign, whose Favour They so much desired; and slight the Happiness, which They courted. And how were They now to better their Circumstances, or to redress the Grievance complain'd of? Could They hope for a milder, gentler, or better Prince than King *David*? Or could any of Them be secure that, under a new Government, They might not as soon break out into Factions and Parties, and as soon supplant, or ruine one another? Besides, how could They expect that God should give Success to a Design so ill-form'd; and laid in Perfidiousness and Treason? Or if He should, that the Success it self might not prove a Snare and a Curse to Them; as it is the usual Method of Divine Providence to make the Prosperity of wicked Men, first or last,

an Inlet to their greater Misery? We find this eminently verified in those very *Israelites*, within a Reign or two after. They were displeas'd at some rough Usage They had met with from their King *Rehoboam*; And They * *rebelled against the House of David* from that day. This God was pleas'd to permit, partly in Consequence of what He had denounc'd against † *Solomon*; and partly by way of Penalty to the *Israelites* Themselves; who had been Partakers in his Sins. The Issue of this was: that, as They revolted from their lawful Sovereign, so They revolted from their Religion too, and went out of Rebellion into Idolatry. When Principles of Morality once sit loose upon Men, it is not to be expected that Principles of Religion will stay long. But to proceed.

Another Grievance which lay heavy upon the Minds of the *Israelites*, was the appearing Slight and Contempt thrown upon Them by the Men of *Judah*. But is Sedition the way to take off Contempt? Or is Rebellion the ready Road to Honour? Would not a manly and generous Behaviour, a steady Loyalty to their lawful Sovereign, a noble Ardor for the true Good of their Countrey, not to be shaken by any private Resentment, or impotent Passion; would not this have abundantly retrieved their Honour, and have set Them above Contempt and Obloquy? Would not this have been infinitely better than to betray a weak Mind, or a corrupt Heart; the surest way to render any Person contemptible, as the contrary is to create Reverence and Respect? Besides that if such Designs fail of Success (as They commonly do) the Contempt is so far from being removed, that it returns upon Them with double

* 1 Kings 12. 19.

† 1 Kings 11. v. 12. 33.

and triple Weight. Thus it proved in the Case before us. God was pleas'd to defeat their wicked Purposes. Their Leader suffered, and the Rest were content to bear much greater Ignominy than what They first complain'd of.

Another thing, which we may reasonably suppose afflicted the *Israelites*, was, that They knew not how otherwise to be revenged on the Men of *Judah*. But it should have been consider'd, that all such Desire of Revenge, is both foolish and hurtful. Hurtful to the World, and most of all generally to the enraged Persons themselves, both as to the inward Torment it carries with it, and the ill Effects and Consequences of it. The Mischief which They intended for Others (as is usual in such Cases) fell chiefly upon Themselves. And the unhappy Men found, to their Sorrow, that it would have been infinitely better to have born a slight Grievance, than to have ventured upon unwarrantable Methods of redressing it.

4. You may please to observe farther, how strong and invincible the Prevalence of some Passions is for the time, maugre all the Remonstrances of Religion, or even Common Humanity. As to Religion; could not the Men of *Israel* have reflected, what a great and crying Sin They were running into? That They were to lift up their Hands against the Lord's Anointed; the Man whom They knew to be chosen of God, * to feed his People *Israel*, and to be a Captain over *Israel*; whom They had solemnly Sworn to, or, made a league with, in *Hebron* before the Lord, and anointed King over *Israel*. Notwithstanding all which, upon slight Pretences, They Rebel against Him. So little does

* 2. Sam. 5. V. 2.

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a Sense of Religion avail, when Men are under the Power of strong Resentments, and so true is it (however Melancholy a Truth it be) that Nature, corrupt Nature, will, for the most Part, prevail over Duty and Principle. And hence it is, that the Strength of any Government, generally, lies more in the *Affections*, than in the *Consciences*, of the People. This is the less to be wonder'd at, since even the Common Principles of Humanity, Strong as They are in most Persons, yet bend and yield to unruly Passions. Had the Rebel-*Israelites*, had any Pity or Compassion left either for Enemies or Friends; any Tenderness for their Native Countrey, which They were endeavouring to lay waste; any Bowels for their Brethren, whose Blood They had a mind to spill; any Consideration for the Cries or Tears, the Frights or Agonies, of such as They were blindly hasting on, to Ravage, Plunder, Murther, and Destroy; They could never have enter'd, upon so slight Motives, into so rash and desperate an Undertaking. But I proceed,

5. To observe, what is of more comfortable Consideration to us, that such violent and impetuous Passions, as make Men Deaf to the Remonstrances of Religion and Humanity, seldom last long.

No sooner was *Sheba*, the Promoter of the Mischiefs removed, but the People whom He had seduced, cooled into Duty and Order, grew Calm and Easy. As it was a sudden Passion which hurried Them on, fed by Mistakes and Misconstructions; so it died upon the first Check and Disappointment. They returned to their Allegiance, and the King lived Peaceably ever after.

A State of Anger and Resentment, Fierceness and Bitterness, is not the natural State of Man's Mind.

It

It requires some outward Force and Violence, as to raise it at first, so to keep it up afterwards. Afflictions will bow it down, or Reflections calm it, or Time will wear it out, if no new Fuel be administred to revive it. Thus it happened in the Instance which I have been considering: and thus, I hope, it hath happened also, in the nearer Instance, which I am next to consider; and which gave occasion to this Day's joyful Thanksgiving.

But when I say *joyful*, mistake me not, as if I thought it all Matter of Joy and Triumph, without a proper Mixture of Compassion, Shame, and Sorrow. This is not like the Triumph over a Foreign Enemy, nor does it become us to shew our Rejoycings in the same Manner, or with the same unbounded Freedoms. For, tho' the Blessing of Heaven be as great, or greater, and the Divine Goodness as remarkable in putting an End to a Rebellion, and preventing a Civil War *at Home*, as in repeated Victories *Abroad*: yet, there is a Tenderness due to the Misfortunes of our Fellow Subjects: and not of those only, who spent their Loyal Blood in the Service of their King and Countrey, but of Them likewise, who were unwarily drawn in and enticed the other way, and have either fallen in Battle, or have died Ingloriously by the Hands of Justice: or of such as still survive; but are too much filled with Shame or Grief, to rejoyce with us; and such also as have their Minds so unhappily divided, between private Affections and the publick Good, that They are not yet able to have a full and perfect Sense of the Blessings of Heaven, or to relish the Happiness of their Countrey. These, and the like Considerations must cast a damp upon our Joy, on this Occasion; and render it something like to what a Man feels

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feels within himself, when by the Loss of his Limbs, He has had the good Fortune to preserve his Body. This shall make me the more tender of speaking to the Case in Hand: and it were well if we could draw a Veil over what can hardly be remember'd without a silent Shame and Sorrow for it. I shall however proceed to my Second general Head, namely,

II. To make some brief Application of the foregoing Reflection, to the Occasion of this Day's Solemnity.

I shall not minutely consider (nor indeed do I pretend to know) the Birth and Rise, or the particular Springs and Motives of the late Rebellion.

I. Only I shall beg leave to observe in General, what is Open and Visible to all, that Passion and Resentment had the greatest Hand in it; as it is the best Excuse for it. I mean in Those, who were profess'd Protestants; and such of Them especially, as had no Scruple about the *Settlement*, in the late Reign, nor in the Beginning of this, nor since; if we may be allow'd to think (as certainly we may) that a Man is not influenc'd by any Principles of Conscience; who at the same time Swears, and Acts against it.

Title indeed was here pretended, as is usual in such Cases. But whoever considers that the pretended Title had been, in a manner, Universally disown'd and disclaim'd in the two preceding Reigns, and frequently rejected by the whole Legislature, and abjured by Men almost of all Ranks, Orders, or Denominations amongst us, both then and since, will easily allow that Title was the Pretence only; and Disgusts and Discontents the true Motives.

Which

Which reminds me of an Observation made by a Great Statesman; and a Polite Writer of our own; * that upon the Disputes of Right and Title to the Crown, between the two Roses, or Races, of York and Lancaster, the popular Discontents at the present Reign, made way for the Succession of a new Pretender; more than any Regards of Right or Justice in their Title; which served only to cover the Bent and Humour of the People to such a Change. Men may pretend Conscience for their Humours, their Passions, their Follies, their Vices; and it is frequent enough so to do; and not easy to discover whether They are sincere or no, while They act consistently with Themselves. But it must be a strange sort of Conscience, that cannot be brought to comply with a Government, and yet can be brought to Swear to it: which is full of Scruples about so uncertain a Thing as the pretended Title, and yet has no Scruple about so plain and clear a Thing, as the Obligation of an Oath: Which dares not give up some supposed Rights of Another, on any Consideration whatever, for fear of Damnation; and yet is not afraid to give up the very Bonds and Links of Humane Society, and the most sacred Ties of All Governments; in a Word: to make God's Name cheap, his Authority contemptible, and his Vengeance despicable in the Eye of the World. But, to proceed,

2. I crave leave to observe next, that it may reasonably be presumed; that Matters had never proceeded so far as to an open Rebellion, had They not been industriously and artfully managed by the Sheba's of our Land, the Emissaries of the Church of Rome; I mean, the profess'd Papists. Men of the

* Temple's Miscell. part 3. p. 46.

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most inveterate Hatred to Our Religion, Laws, and Establishment, and to whatever tends to the Prosperity and Honour of the *English* Church, or the *English* Nation. Who have been contriving all imaginable ways to blast and ruine our Happy Reformation from the first Commencing of it; have been concern'd almost in every Commotion of State, and active in every Rebellion; feeding upon our Factions, and rejoycing daily in our unhappy Divisions. These, as is well known, were the Chief Promoters of the late Disturbances; actuated with Revenge against our King, our Countrey, our Laws, and Constitution; and with a Zeal for that Church, which scruples not to allow, and even to bless and sanctify, any Fraud or Deceit, any Treachery or Perfidiousness, any Rage or Violence, in order to extirpate what They call Heresy, and to carry on the Cause of their own Superstition and Idolatry. How would They rejoyce, and insult over us, to find us doing with our own Hands, what They have been labouring unsuccessfully for above a Century and a half together? As to our Heats and Animosities amongst our Selves, They may subside and fall by Degrees; and every Thing may revert into right Order, so long as we keep out the Common Enemy. But if once we open a Door to Papal Tyranny and Usurpation, and submit our selves to that Yoke of Bondage, all will be lost, and past recovery. It is worth remarking, that amidst our many Distractions and Confusions, during the Grand Rebellion and Usurpation, there was so much of the *English* Spirit still left, that They preserved Themselves against any Attempt of Foreign Powers. The Nation was still honour'd and rever'd Abroad, tho' dismally divided and distracted at Home. In a while, Their Heats abated, and They settled into
Order

Order and Regularity: still retaining their own Sovereignty and Independency, and their Religious and Civil Rights Whole and Entire. These Reflections have carried me a little out of Method: but I return.

I should here go on to pursue the Parallel between the Case of the revolting *Israelites*, and that of the Persons concern'd in the late Rebellion, in many Particulars; as the strange absurdity and inconsistency of the Design, how improbable a Method to redress any imaginary or real Grievances, without involving the whole Nation in infinitely more and greater; how repugnant to the Principles of Religion, and to Common Humanity; how unlikely to prosper, and how destructive in it's Consequences, if it had. The last I shall speak to presently; The rest I pass over: the Thing speaks it self, or may be easily understood from what hath been observed above; and we may spare our selves the trouble of an ungrateful Remembrance. It is sufficient that the good Hand of Providence has defeated and blasted the Designs of our Enemies. That our Countrey is not made a Scene of War, or a Field of Blood: That Neighbours and Brethren are not, at this present, Destroying and Murthering one another: that our Goods and Possessions are not violently torn from us, our Houses rifled, our Temples defac'd, Villages burned up, or Cities consumed, and turn'd into ruinous Heaps. * That *Judah and Israel may dwell safely every Man under his Vine, and under his Figtree*. In a Word: that we have the Comfort and Happiness to meet together this Day, to bless and praise Almighty God for the Preservation of our King and our Countrey.

* 1. Kings 4. 25.

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our Religion, Laws, and Liberties, and all we hold dear, from impending Ruine. What the Consequences of a successful Rebellion, (after a severe Struggle, and wading through a Sea of Blood) might have been, we do not certainly know; and it is happy for us that we do not. But in all human Views, and according to the probable Issues of Things (without a miracle to prevent them) the least we could expect was, to have had the noblest and happiest Island in the World ravaged and defaced by foreign Invaders; the bravest People, who have been used to give the Law, or the Balance to *Europe*, made the Scorn and the Derision of those that hate them; and, to finish our Misery, the purest and best constituted Church in the Christian World, which was founded in the Blood of Martyrs, and has been preserved hitherto by marvellous Providences, given up for a Prey to Seducers, and overrun with Bigottry, Superstition, and Idolatry.

But some perhaps may think, might not God's good Providence have prevented all this, even under a Succession of Popish Princes? Yes certainly, it might. For what might not an omnipotent God do for us, under the most deplorable and desperate Circumstances? But who shall assure us that He will do it, if we suffer our selves to fall into such Circumstances, by our own Supineness, or, what is worse, Perverseness? Let any Man tell us why Providence has not prevented the like in other Countreys: or how it comes to pass, that a Succession of *Popish* Princes hath ever proved fatal to the Protestant Religion. The *Roman Conclave* understand this well enough: And have been labouring this Point with indefatigable Zeal and Pains; never doubting, but that by the gaining of this only, They may soon have what They please.

It is frankly said by a late Writer of the Order of the *Jesuits*, speaking of the Consequence of a *Popish* Successor to these Kingdoms: that * *it must perpetuate it (the Romish Religion) upon the Throne, and in time, bring it to prevail among the People.* The Remark is true and just; founded on History and Observation, and the plain Reason of Things. We humbly trust, that God's good Providence will prevent this; and will support that Blessed Reformation, which his own right Hand hath planted in these Kingdoms. But not by Miracles, nor out of the ordinary Way, but by means proper to it, that is, by perpetuating to us a Succession of *Protestant* Princes; the way by which, He has been pleased hitherto to support it, and to preserve it down to this Day. And we have reason to think and hope, that He will still so preserve and continue it. So long at least, as till the Sins of the Nation are full-grown, till we have fill'd up the *Measure of our Iniquities*, and are become ripe for Vengeance. God grant, the Ingratitude of many for Mercies received, their unreasonable Murmurs and Complaints, their Discontentedness with a well-settled Government, which They have frequently own'd, and solemnly sworn to; their Heats and Animosities, and Party-Rage, may not hasten the Approaches of the Day of Vengeance; and too soon Eclipse the Blessed Light of the Reformation amongst us.

But these are too Melancholy Presages upon a Day of Thanksgiving; which lets us into a more comfortable Scene, and gives us a pleasing Prospect of better Things. I shall pass on to the last part of my Design;

* F. I. D' Orleans Hist. Stuarts p. 298.

III. To draw a few practical Advices proper to the Place and Audience.

1. And the first is, to beware of the Approaches of Passion, and to guard against any Temptation or Provocation thereto. The Studious Life may be an Advantage to us in this respect; by affording us a more thorough Insight into the Affections and Workings of Humane Nature; acquainting us with the Distempers of the Mind, and the Causes of them, and the Methods proper to heal them. Teaching us to think, and reflect; and to turn our Eyes inward upon our selves. This must render us less liable to be ensnared by Passion; and better able to discern, what use we are to make of any Trials, or Provocations we may meet with from the World.

We have complain'd sometimes, and indeed with Reason, of the general Reflections thrown upon the Universities and Clergy: such Treatment was as injurious, as it was rude and uncivil. To throw Scandal at large, and to condemn whole Bodies for the Faults of a few, is an uncharitable, and unwarrantable procedure. And this might have been enough to exasperate some Men. But such as consider that this was chiefly owing to the Petulance of a few Writers, and those the least considerable; and how unavoidable such Things are, and how little they deserve the notice of understanding Men, and how easily They are wiped off by a prudent and exemplary Conduct: I say, such as consider thus, will think such Censures proper only to provoke their Pity, or to exercise their Vertues, or to put them upon the practise of the Apostle's Rule,
** not rendering Evil for Evil, or Railing for Railing.*

* 1. Pet. 3. v. 9.

but contrariwise Blessing, knowing that They are thereunto called, that They should inherit a Blessing.

2. A second useful Caution is, to be upon our Guard against any popular Pretences, or vulgar Delusions. It should seem the Privilege and Happiness of such as are train'd up to think justly, and to reflect coolly, to be above any thing of that kind; to be able to distinguish between Persons and Principles, between Men and Things. It is natural for many to run in implicitly with whatever happens to be espous'd by any particular set of Men, with whom They have been engaged in some Common Interests. The Reputation of Constancy, the Fear of Disobliging, and the Shame of Deserting; are very powerful Prejudices, and strong Temptations. But the best Philosophy, as well as Religion, teaches us to arm against this Delusion: acquainting us, that it is the part of a wise and good Man, to be constant to none, farther than They are constant to Themselves, and to their Duty. And that the truest Constancy is, to sit loose to Men, and to keep fix'd to sound and good Principles. Men are Uncertain, Fickle, Various: Principles are settled Things, and change not. These are what will hold, and what we may safely trust to, while Men's Humours are afloat; and their Passions toss them to and fro: and These are what, after They have been weary of a vain Pursuit, They will at length return to, when They grow cool and reflect.

When a Nation is unhappily divided, and Animosities run high; it is easy to imagine, there may be danger of Extremes either way. A good Man has no Security in such Cases, nor any firm Ground, to rest Himself upon, but by examining carefully what is true, right, and just in it self, separate from common Vogue, or popular Opi-

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Opinion. And this is so necessary a part of Christian Conduct, that, amidst the Variety of Cases and Incidents which may happen, there's no other Way of preserving a good Conscience, and keeping up to one certain Rule and Tenour of Life and Conversation. And He that wants either the Courage or the Will, to do this, knows not yet what it is to be a good Christian, or a good Man. But,

3^{dly} and lastly, It should be our especial Care not only to forbear any Thing tending to promote Divisions, but to use our best Endeavors to heal and reconcile them.

As there are none more sensible of these Things than our selves; or more likely to suffer by them; so I beg leave to intimate, how becoming and proper a part of our Profession and Business it is, to do, what in us lies, to prevent the Growth and Increase of them. While Animosities prevail, Arts and Sciences will gradually decay and loose Ground: not only as wanting suitable Encouragement, but also, as being deprived of that Freedom, Quiet, and Repose, which are necessary to raise and cherish them. As Divisions increase, Christian Charity will decline daily, till it becomes an empty Name, or an *Idea* only. Discipline will of Course slacken and hang loose; and the Consequence of that must be a general Dissoluteness and Corruption of Manners. Nor will the Enemy be wanting to sow Tares, to corrupt our Faith, as well as Practice; and to introduce a general Latitude of Opinions. *Arianism*, *Deism*, *Atheism*, will insensibly steal upon us, while our Heads and Hearts run after Politicks and Parties.

It were a happy Thing if any Remedy could be found out for these *Grievances*; if all odious Names of

of Distinction could be forgotten, and laid aside; and moderate Counsels might take place: if Men would learn Humility and Contentedness, Meekness and Charity; and consider that the *Wrath of Man worketh not the Righteousness of God*; and that all Envy and Malice, and Party-Rage, are directly opposite to the mild and gentle Spirit of the Gospel.

Permit me to observe that the great Warmth and Eagerness, which is shown by many, is not about Heaven and Happiness, and the Blessedness of the Life to come. It is not so much as pretended that the Glory of God, or the Salvation of Men, is what engages their Thoughts and Concern; or what They so eagerly contend for. It is all for the fading and perishing Things of this Life; Power, Honour, and Riches. These are the Things which divide and distract us. Were it possible to restore a true Spirit of Heavenly Mindedness, those eager Contests would soon fall of Themselves, as having no longer any sufficient Foundation.

We profess to believe a God, and a Future Judgement: A State of Eternal Happiness, and a State of Eternal Misery. We have been taught that we are as * *Strangers and Pilgrims* here on Earth; that we are to seek for a *better Countrey*, and are to look upon our Selves as Citizens of Heaven; of that blessed Place, from whence all Envy and Ill-will, all Wrath and Bitterness, all Rancour and Malice, all Fury and Violence, must be for ever shut out; and nothing but Love, Peace, Gentleness, Harmony and Goodness, abound for evermore. These Things, I presume, are not told us, in Scripture, as Matters of Theory, and Speculation only, or as Subjects to

* Hebr. 11. 13. 1 Pet. 2. 11.

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talk on: but are design'd to influence our Practice and to make us good Men.

It is a moving and a solemn Reflection, made by * a great Prelate of our Church, on another Occasion.

“ That a good Man would be loth to be taken
“ out of the World, reeking Hot from a sharp
“ Contention with a perverse Adversary, and not
“ a little out of Countenance to find Himself in
“ this Temper translated into the calm and peace-
“ ful *Regions* of the *Blessed*; where nothing but per-
“ fect *Charity* and *Good-will* reign for ever. This
was meant of Controversial Disputes; but may be
applied with equal, or greater Force, to our Party-
Contests; which are neither so innocent, nor so
useful, nor carried on so coolly as the other.

But this I leave to your serious and pious Meditation. And shall conclude with a word or two of Advice to the Youth of the University, whose want of Years and Sedateness may render Them most liable to intemperate Sallies.

As the privilege of their Education raises Them above the *Vulgar Crowd*, and is apt to inspire larger Thoughts and Views in Them, as well as to create Expectation in Others: so it concerns Them highly, to demean Themselves suitably thereto, and to act up to their *Character*.

To behave Themselves Soberly, Peaceably and Discreetly: to let Party-Disputes alone; which can hardly be managed with Temper, even by Men of Years and Gravity.

Not to provoke or to exasperate one another, by any opprobrious Words, or invidious Names, invented only to sow Discord, and to propagate

Mischief in the World. In fine, to use no Insulting, no Rudeness, no misbecoming Behaviour, on this Day of Thanksgiving, or on any Day after: but to curb their Passions, to observe Rules and Orders, to submit to their proper Governors, and to pursue their respective Studies; such as may hereafter render Them the Supports and Ornaments of our most Holy Church, and so many Blessings and Comforts of the Age and Place They shall live in.

In the mean while, to set a shining Example of Sobriety, Modesty, Regularity, and all other Graces and Virtues that may tend to promote the Glory of Almighty God, the Security, and Satisfaction of our most Gracious, and, to Us particularly, most INDULGENT Sovereign, and the Peace of His Kingdoms; together with the Honour and Prosperity of the *University* whereunto They belong; and their own Comfort, Welfare, and Happiness, both now and for ever.

F I N I S.

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